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UNCLAS BOGOTA 000225

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: COLOMBIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO UN PEACEKEEPING MISSION IN HAITI
(MINUSTAH)

REF: STATE 12558

¶1. (SBU) Per reftel, Emboffs spoke on February 11 with officials at the Colombian Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). These Government of Colombia (GOC) officials confirmed that there are currently 26 Colombian police officers in Haiti as part of MINUSTAH. The Colombian police contingent, led by Lt. Colonel Santiago Camelo, is specialized in anti-kidnapping and anti-narcotics.

¶2. (SBU) Immediately prior to the January 12 Haiti earthquake, the GOC intended to send an additional eight police officers specialized in border patrol and protection, but the deployment was put on hold following the earthquake. MOD officials told us that the U.N. had previously approved travel for these eight police officers, and they are currently expected to deploy within the next three to four weeks. Since arrivals into Port-au-Prince are complicated, the GOC plans to send the eight officers on a commercial flight through Santo Domingo. The Colombian Ambassador to the Dominican Republic is retired General Mario Montoya, who is dually-accredited to Haiti. Colombia does not have an Embassy in Haiti.

¶3. (SBU) MOD officials noted that all Colombian police officers participating in MINUSTAH arrive with the necessary training and equipment for their deployment, and are proficient in English (only one of the officers speaks French and none speaks Creole). The Colombian officers are expected to deploy initially for 12 months, but MOD officials indicated that the GOC may be willing to extend their tours to a total of two years if possible. The GOC expects to send additional officers to replace those whose tours expire. MOD officials also indicated that the GOC is interested in participating in longer-term efforts to rehabilitate the Haitian police force, based on a GOC report dated November 2009.

¶4. (SBU) GOC officials told us that Ambassador Claudia Blum Capurro de Barberi, the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United

Nations, has been coordinating the GOC's MINUSTAH participation with UNDPKO.

15. (U) Minimize considered.
BROWNFIELD